



# Suicide

**S**uicide is a devastating act that almost always seems to friends and family members like a bolt from the blue. But people often give clues that they're thinking of suicide. Recognizing the warning signs of suicide could result in a life being saved.

## Warning Signs

Giving away cherished possessions, making a will and being preoccupied with death are red flags for impending suicide. Furthermore, the old saying that people who talk about suicide don't do it is simply not true. Often such talk is a cry for help before it's too late.

Another warning sign of suicide is depression. Any of these changes could indicate depression:

- feelings of hopelessness, helplessness
- changes in eating, sleeping patterns or behavior
- withdrawal
- poor performance at work or school
- poor concentration

## Risk Factors

Anyone who is depressed or has been depressed is at risk for suicide. The following are also risk factors:

- alcohol and drug use
- a history of physical or sexual abuse
- troubled teenage years
- death of a friend or family member
- end of a relationship
- a previous suicide attempt

## What to Do

If you suspect someone is considering suicide, take warning signs seriously. Don't assume it will blow over. Share your concerns with someone who is in a position to take charge.

Getting a person past a suicide crisis involves being very direct. Ask these questions:

- 1 Do you feel there is no other way?
- 2 Do you have a plan to commit suicide?
- 3 If yes, how and when would you do it?

If the answers indicate the person is serious about suicide, don't try to talk him or her out

of it. But do try to make a deal with the person: that they won't do anything without talking to you—or another trusted person—first. Then get help. Talk to a responsible family member, counselor, EAP professional or suicide prevention hotline immediately. If possible, have a trusted friend or relative stay with the person until the crisis is passed. Follow up with professional help. As a friend or family member, show understanding, compassion and caring, even though you may be angry with the person for putting you through this.

## If You're Considering Suicide...

Reach out: Talk to a family member, friend or doctor. They will be able to get you the help you need and deserve. Or call your local suicide hotline. You can find it in the community service pages of your telephone directory. It's hard to see it when you're feeling down, but getting help can help you understand that your life is valuable to yourself and others.